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**ALASKA'S UNTAPPED WEALTH—Besides Minerals and Forest Products, the Territory Boasts Breathless Scenery Like This at Kenai Lake, a Lure to Vacationists**

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ALASKA VISITORS ASSOCIATION

ALASKA VISITORS ASSOCIATION

**GOLD PUT ALASKA ON MAP—Hydraulic-Dredge Operations Supplant Sourdough Placer Miners. The Average Yearly Income from Gold Surpasses Alaska's Purchase Price**

and made the United States take a new look at its previously neglected northern territory. Statehood has been considered, rejected by Congress.

Most Alaskans—nyloned newcomers and bearded oldtimers alike—favor Statehood. April 24 they will join in common cause when they go to the polls to vote on a proposed State constitution and on a plan to send a congressman and two senators to Washington as nonvoting spokesmen.

Alaska has inherited a fat legacy of false notions since 1867, when Secretary of State William H. Seward bought it from Russia at two cents an acre. Wits dubbed the new territory Polaria, Icebergia, Seward's Icebox, and Walrussia, then people and government all but forgot their acquisition. Until 1884, Alaska had no government. When Indians threatened its handful of settlers, a Canadian warship courteously dropped anchor off the coast to lend protection until a United States vessel took over. Little wonder that the territorial flower is the forget-me-not.

Superimpose Alaska on the United States. Its southeastern point rests on Charleston, South Carolina. Anchorage lies near Kansas City. The Aleutian Islands brush Mexico, then curve up to California. Point Barrow, Alaska's northern tip, hits the Canadian line. Within this huge land mass, twice the size of Texas, live fewer than 200,000 people, average age: 26. Within it also are concentrated mighty mountains, copious rivers, rich valleys never furrowed by a plow, acres of forest untouched by an ax.



UMI

ALASKA VISITORS ASSOCIATION

# Alaska

## Next Week It Votes On the Issue of Statehood

A CITY in California? Colorado? No, this is Anchorage, Alaska's rapidly spreading metropolis and up-to-the-minute symbol of the new North. There isn't a sourdough or a dogsled in sight.

Many of Anchorage's 60,000 area citizens recently saw their first Eskimos when a few were brought down from Nome for a city celebration. Supermarket clerks and suburban housewives goggled at one well-heeled Eskimo who went about the neon-lighted city shooting copious color footage with an expensive movie camera.

Anchorage is mostly a post-World War II phenomenon. In 1940 its population stood at 3,448. One suburb alone now counts more persons than that. Seeing the schools, the stores, the '56 models at the curbs, a visitor from the States would hardly realize he was away from home.

Though this south-coast city is outstanding in size, war with Japan and the threat of Soviet Russia has boomed the population of all Alaska,

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what resources of coal, iron, or uranium may lie in Alaska. More than 90 percent of the land is government owned.

Juneau, territorial capital, clings to a shoestring of coast between salt water and jagged mountain slopes on Alaska's Norwaylike panhandle. It grew around gold mines and fisheries, now produces lumber and serves as a crossroad for air and sea transportation. Steamers nose through the

CHARLES MAY

spectacular inland waterway from Seattle and Vancouver to reach misty Juneau, above.

Air lines and a highway also link Alaska with the 48 States. Your School Bulletins writer, traveling the Alaska Highway during British Columbia's mild summer, saw dozens of touring families heading for Fairbanks with little more preparation than for a jaunt to Grand Canyon.

But what about year-round climate? Anchorage's coldest temperature, over a 22-year period, was 36 below zero. Its hottest was 92. Like many settlements on the peninsula its precipitation is not heavy. Southeastern Alaska—the panhandle that abuts British Columbia—has a heavy rainfall and the same average temperature as Baltimore. Deep in the territory's mountainous interior, both winters and summers are more severe. Fort Yukon's minimum temperature, over 23 years, was 78 below. Maximum: 100.



UMI

GILBERT GROSVENOR

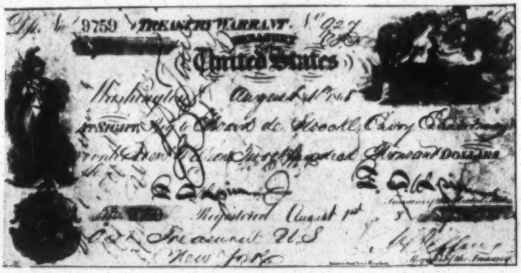
**Bush Pilots Bring the Wilderness Close to Streamlined Towns: Grosvenor Lake**

Despite the growth of Anchorage and other towns, men have barely tapped these riches. Gold strikes brought prospectors to little Nome, perched on the Seward Peninsula, 57 years ago. It still supplies placer mines and is a center for native craftsmen. Fairbanks, near Alaska's center, is also a gold-mining town. Two Air Force bases lie near by, as do the University of Alaska and the world's farthest-north country club.

Cordova, east of Anchorage, sprang up beside a copper mine, now exhausted. Canneries keep it busy. Ketchikan, at the southern end of the panhandle, is the salmon-canning center of the world and a leading shipping port for Alaskan spruce—some used in aircraft manufacture. A new pulpwood plant has sprouted at Ketchikan, taking up the slack of the diminishing fishing industry.

In this list of a few Alaskan towns, there is no mention of agriculture, or of industrial minerals—coal, iron ore, and others. Farming still is confined to a few valleys like the Matanuska, 50 miles from Anchorage, where recent settlers have formed cooperatives to produce varied crops. Arable land is limited in the territory, partly because permafrost lies only a few inches underground. This subsurface band of frozen soil also restricts mining, and tempts prospectors to seek high-value metals like gold. No one knows

J. MALCOLM GREANY




**REAL ESTATE BARGAIN! This United States Treasury Warrant for $7,200,000 Went to Tsarist Russia in 1867**

ANDREW H. BROWN, NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC STAFF; NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC PHOTOGRAPHER JOHN E. FLETCHER

Above, *Glacier* leads the way through the Ross Sea pack for a string of navy transports and an oiler. These vessels had previously taken up stations some 250 miles apart between New Zealand and Antarctica, serving as radio beacons (and rescue stand-bys, luckily unneeded) for an historic flight. Navy planes successfully completed a nonstop leap from New Zealand, and the ships fell into line to bring men and equipment to the new bases.

Photographer John E. Fletcher won the draw to determine which cameraman would make a long flight beyond the South Pole in a four-engined Naval transport plane. One of his photographs (right) shows typical Antarctic scenery. Craggy peaks, some never before seen by man, rise more than 10,000 feet, holding cloud banks in check. Rocks are dark brown, protruding from wind-whipped contours of everlasting snow.

Most personnel of Operation Deepfreeze are home now. But a small contingent of brave men remain behind, snugly housed amid ice, to wait out the long winter and greet next year's arrivals.

# Admiral Byrd Revisits Little America

Once more Rear Admiral Richard E. Byrd has visited his "second home," Antarctica. As Officer in Charge of the 1955-56 United States expedition, Admiral Byrd, a Trustee of the National Geographic Society, made his fifth trip to the vast ice-bound continent that holds the South Pole.

One "must" for the admiral was to take a look at the campsite of his first and second expeditions, the famed Little America I and II. Though ice movement has destroyed the Bay of Whales, landing place for these early expeditions (GSB April 4, 1955), two radio towers, almost buried, greeted the "Mayor of Little America" upon his recent return.

Built in 1929, the 70-foot radio masts loomed above the little village of tunnels and burrows dug into snow and ice. At left, one of the towers raises its time-tilted head perhaps nine feet above the snow.

Admiral Byrd, in caribou-skin clothing, talks about the old days with bare-headed Dr. Paul Siple who, as a Boy Scout, joined the first Byrd Expedition—a venture the National Geographic Society was proud to sponsor. All living quarters of this old site are deeply buried, but a new Stars and Stripes appropriately streams above. This year two bases were built: one, Little America V, at Kainan Bay, 30 miles from the original site; the other in McMurdo Sound, 400 miles west. Little America V will be the main U.S. base for International Geophysical Year studies.

Two National Geographic staffmen accompanied "Operation Deepfreeze" as its ships and planes probed southward late last year. One, writer Andrew H. Brown, waves from the Navy icebreaker *Glacier* as it punches a channel through McMurdo Sound ice (right).

ANDREW H. BROWN, NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC STAFF

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC PHOTOGRAPHER JOHN E. FLETCHER

**HOW MANY HOMERS IN THIS ONE?**
**Inspector with Calipers Measures and Checks Round Billets, Weeds out Culls**

saws cut them into bat lengths. Wedge-shaped pieces are split from each log, shaped into round billets three inches across, scanned for flaws, then seasoned for more than a year (right). Lathes shape the bat (above) as the workman carefully weighs and measures. It is dipped into a solution which guards the wood, lacquered (below), and stamped with the maker's trademark and the signature of a diamond hero.

Early bats came in an assortment of shapes and sizes, were made from any strong wood. Splits were checked by nails.

HOWELL WALKER, NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC STAFF

AMERICAN FORESTS

Today's professional players sometimes select bats while the wood is still in billets. Ted Williams likes narrow grain. Babe Ruth wanted dark spotches (caused by trunk bending in the wind).

Aptly, some of the best ash forest adjoins Cooperstown, New York, home of baseball's Hall of Fame. Yet the South claims half the bat factories.

The nation's oldest and biggest batmakers, Hillerich and Bradsby of Louisville, Kentucky, makers of the Louisville Slugger, started in 1884 when a young woodworker watched his local team's star hitter break a bat instead of getting a vital single. Three other companies now offer competition.

Incidentally, when your coach tells you to keep the label up when you swing, it's not superstition. The sides of the grain pack the wallop for home runs. The label is stamped on top of the grain so players will know where *not* to hit.

# BATS

## TAILOR-MADE FOR SLUGGERS

DON WINGFIELD

Batter up!

Planted at home plate, cap adjusted against the sun, he dares the pitcher to put one through the strike zone.

Here it comes, smoking fast. There is a glint of shellacked wood as the batter swings, and a flat crack like a rifle shot. A solid hit!

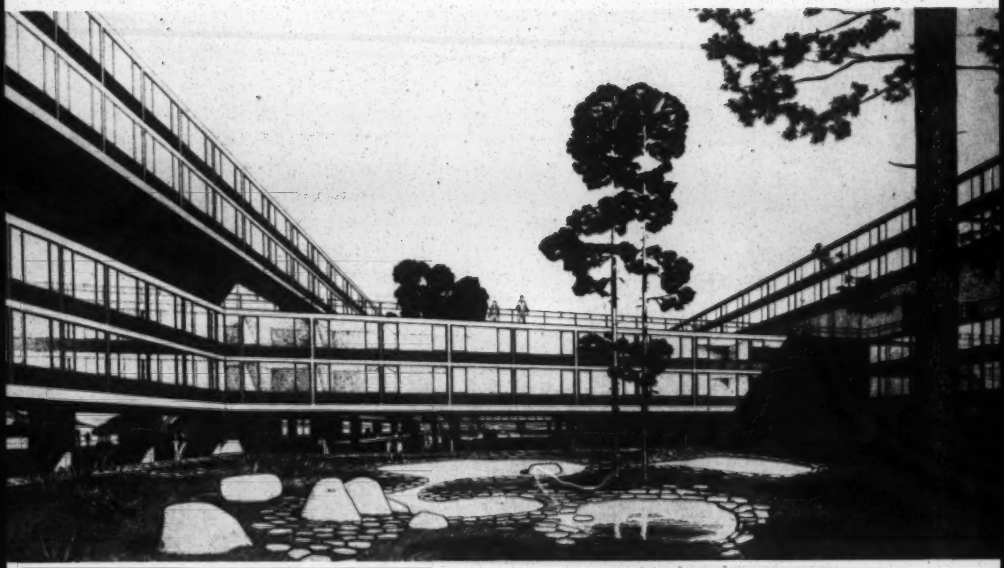
You stand and cheer the hitter, not pausing to think that some credit belongs to the bat. After all, when a hand-held piece of timber meets a heavy ball traveling 90 miles an hour and smashes it back 400 feet, it has to be regarded as a remarkable tool.

Of course a baseball bat isn't just any piece of wood. Its story goes back to a forest where white ash, preferably second growth, matures under ideal conditions. A good bat may take 50 years to grow, developing steadily part way up a New York or Pennsylvania mountain side, sheltered from wind. These conditions give the tree an even growth. Grain is smooth, strong, and uniform, yet not so close that the wood becomes rigid.

Timber cruisers pick out likely looking trees, a foot or more in diameter. Each one may produce 60 bats. Trees go to a mill where crosscut



HILLERICH AND BRADSBY CO.



U. S. AIR FORCE OFFICIAL

Should a cadet become physically disqualified for flying he will still get his commission—as an Air Force ground officer—if he has earned it.

Controversy still surrounds proposed designs (severely functional) for Academy buildings. But no one doubts the site's natural beauty. Here, not only an entire college will rise, but a college town of perhaps 10,000 people. Faculty and staff families will have their own elementary and high schools, churches, theaters, shops, playgrounds. A railroad station, post office, library, bank, post exchange, and airport will serve the community.

Each Academy barracks like that above will have its dayroom, its barber, tailor, and dispensary. Students will benefit from modern classrooms, laboratories, conference and reading rooms. Unless changes are made, the Academy will include a library, museum, two chapels and a rectory, a club, theater, field house, gymnasium, swimming pool, hockey rink, golf course, stadium, and parade ground.

Today's freshmen, setting the pace in simple wooden barracks at Denver's Lowry Air Force Base, should be able to spend senior year in the new plant. Even without their campus, these cadets are busily building a tradition—complete with aerial jargon—for subsequent classes to honor and obey. Under the guidance of young air training officers, who act as upperclassmen, the fledglings are inventing an Air Force version of the plebe training that has evolved throughout generations at the Military and Naval Academies.

"Sir, the JP-4 has completed its cross-country and is on the ramp!" shouts a freshman, rigidly seated at the dining hall.

Translation is simple, really. JP-4 (jet fuel) means coffee. The coffee pot, then, has gone to the kitchen for a refill and is back on the table. By 1960, everyone will understand.



UMI

U. S. AIR FORCE, OFFICIAL

*Service Academies—No. 5*

# Air Force Academy: Colorado Springs

W. SUSCHITZKY

Snuggling beside Colorado's massive Front Range, dominated by 14,110-foot Pikes Peak, a 17,500-acre sweep of landscape awaits transformation into a community. The spanking new United States Air Force Academy has a freshman class, a design for uniforms, a mascot—the falcon (left)—and a few tentative traditions. It won't have its plant, a few miles north of Colorado Springs, until about 1958. From then on, this newest service academy will be flying high.

Two thousand, six hundred healthy young men will fill the Academy. To enter, an unmarried American citizen between 17 and 22 must seek Congressional or special appointment—as in the case of Annapolis and West Point. The candidate must then take the rigid Air Force physical exam for flight training, pilot and observer aptitude tests, and the usual "college boards."

Academy courses combine liberal arts with engineering. Though cadets must learn aerodynamics, electrical engineering and electronics, physics, chemistry, graphics, mathematics, they must also absorb English, history, a language, other humanities. The idea is to produce broadly educated officers rather than technicians.

Summer training involves some 50 hours of flying. Graduates will know aerial navigation and will receive Aircraft Observer wings along with their regular Air Force commissions. Pilot training comes later.

*Glamorous Watchdog*

# The Peacock

W. SUSCHITZKY

The peacock, symbol of pride, is slated to become useful as well as ornamental. It is taking on the duties of watchdog.

Peacocks are naturally suspicious and farmers have found that they can be trained to set up a raucous howling at the approach of strangers. Their shrill cries frighten thieves away from henhouse or cornfield. They will even attack small animals.

The male of the peafowl species of the pheasant family has been noted from ancient times for his dazzling splendor. His chief distinction is the feature wrongly called his tail. This brilliant "train" of feathers fans out from his back in front of the true tail quills. With neck and breast feathers of greenish-blue, the peacock is a resplendent sight when he unfurls his train in courting. The somber peahen, who boasts no train, is quite impressed.

As pets, peafowl have some of the aloofness of cats. They come when called, eat out of the hand, but do not respond affectionately to caresses. And their piercing shrieks do not endear them to neighbors. They will eat almost anything—small animals, ants, grass, vegetables, even snakes. They themselves are no longer popular food as in Roman times when their brains and tongues were considered delicious additions to a banquet. Dry and rather tasteless, their meat cannot compete with that of Cousin Pheasant. However, it still is served, more or less as a curiosity, in some London restaurants featuring dishes of the Middle Ages.

In the days of chivalry, the peacock adorned coats of arms. The Chinese adapted the train spread as the back of the rattan "peacock chair" which in prewar days was a popular souvenir of the Orient.

Aristotle described the peacock as having "the feathers of an angel, the voice of the devil." The angel plumage still wins the bird a place as a decoration for parks and formal gardens, and the devilish shrieks now seem to have their uses.